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CONTEMPORARY ECHOES

THE CHIEF LIBERAL ORGAN'S ANALYSIS

(From the Westminster Gazette)

THOSE who are exploring the mind of America in regard to the present war will find abundant material in the Third Centennial Number of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, which was delivered in London at the end of last week. Two articles, in particular, catch the eye. One by the editor, Mr. George Harvey, defends President Wilson, and takes the rather singular form of an open letter to Lord Northcliffe, who is wholly innocent of the press comments in this country of which Mr. Harvey complains; the other, by Mr. Garrison Villard, deals in anticipation with the Peace Treaty, and urges a bold initiative upon President Wilson when the right time arrives. The two writers have this in common, that they propound the same theory of President Wilson's present policy. The President has been much blamed by a large number of Americans, including Mr. Roosevelt, as well as by some Englishmen, because, while he has kept silent about the violation of Belgian neutrality, the destruction of Louvain, and other exhibitions of German frightfulness, he has intervened on subjects touching the pecuniary and material interests of America. Two explanations have generally been suggested for his silence, the one—uncharitable and antecedently improbable—that he was thinking of the next Presidential election and was anxious not to offend the German vote; the other, prudential and by no means discreditable, that, being under no obligation to involve his country in the European struggle, he was determined not to make verbal protests which might be flouted with impunity. Mr. Harvey and Mr. Villard have a third theory, which, we imagine, is propounded with authority. This is that President Wilson is looking ahead to the part which he may have to play in the peace negotiations, and is determined to keep himself uncompromised for that eventuality. Mr. Harvey writes:

I believe that I am quite within bounds in saying that the great majority of our people approved the course pursued by President Wilson, upon the theory that any seeming infraction of our professed neutrality, in itself of no practical effect, might subsequently operate to rob our Government of opportunities to render real service to those whom we would befriend and whose success we ardently desired then, as we do even more strongly now. Your Government apparently understood this, else they would have indicated in some way their dissatisfaction; but your people clearly did not and do not now—a most regrettable circumstance, for which, as it seems to me, nobody can be justly blamed.

Mr. Villard looks forward to the same event:

Behind the President stands the sound, generous, and united public opinion of the American people, and that can be focused and expressed when the hour

comes. How to make it tell is the President's task; it cannot be impossible when the belligerents have already besought us to exert it. Failure, of course, may be the President's lot. The bitter hatreds being aroused may end the possibility of even his good offices; but emphatically this is a case where not failure, but low aim, will be the crime. The opportunity is to serve not merely America and the belligerents, but all mankind. And the people of this country would hail as another Lincoln a President who could translate into action their ardent desire to render this service and to give expression to our own pacific aims. By the side of this of what importance is a formal declaration that the United States views with regret the violation of Belgian neutrality? All the world knows that it does; to record it officially might be to antagonize two great nations and to tie our hands for the "final help" which the London *Times* says the United States must give.

Whether this is the true explanation of President Wilson's conduct it is not for us to say, and in any case we have no ground of complaint. But the implications of this particular plea are worth examining, for they have an important bearing on the future action of the United States.

Mr. Villard, apparently, contemplates a victory for the Allies and a disposition on the part of the Allies to make an immoderate use of their victory. "It is precisely," he says, "for the two offending nations" (i. e., the nations whose offenses have not been rebuked) "that the United States ought to step into the breach. The victors, if victors the Allies prove to be, must needs be checked unless smoldering animosities like those left by the peace of 1871 and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine are to rankle for another forty years, then to burst into flames again. Already in England they are beginning to see this. . . . The 'Union of Democratic Control' has been founded, one of the objects of which is to influence the terms of peace so that at least no province or territory shall be torn from its present allegiance, except by the consent of the people, duly registered by a fair vote." . . . "American opinion particularly must be directed towards safeguarding the best interests of Germany when the war ends, for the claims of her people on us cannot be denied, however we may reprobate her participation in the struggle or the policies of her General Staff. This will be the time to show how deep-seated is the friendship between the two nations, and to prove that we remember how German brain and brawn have helped to make this country what it is."

Thus, according to Mr. Villard, Germany is to be beaten, but the United States is to weigh in on her side to mitigate the penalties which she might otherwise have to pay for defeat. On this showing it is not very easy to say why the United States should remain silent in the mean time. She would be in no worse position for helping Germany, and in a considerably better position to influence the Allies, if at the critical moment she were able to say that she had used her influence against the excesses of their enemies. On Mr. Villard's showing the United States would be helping Germany actively at the end of the war, passively during the continuance of the war.

Mr. Villard is tactless, and this, we are sure, is not President Wilson's intention. The President stands for complete neutrality in thought as well as in action, and it would not be in conformity with that attitude to anticipate that intervention will be necessary to save Germany from an immoderate use of victory by the Allies. We turn to Mr. Harvey, and his article throws real light on the attitude of those Americans—he describes them as "the great majority"—who stand by the President in his careful neutrality, while generally sympathizing with the Allies. Certain things he says with blunt

frankness. The United States are not going to interfere for our *beaux yeux*. They do not acknowledge ties of kinship, they do not consider that "as a political entity" they are in debt to England. They have no obligations to France or Russia requiring "embroilment in causes not their own." But their intellectual and moral sympathies are with our *cause*, and they judge that even better than we do. For "the real issue is not," he says, "as your people seem to think, mere militarism; it is the hideous conception of which militarism is but one of many manifestations; it is despotism itself; the despotism which united our people originally in armed resistance, and which is no less hateful to us now than it was then." In support of this thesis Mr. Harvey furnishes a searching analysis of the characteristic Prussian doctrines as propounded by Treitschke, and concludes with a passage which should give ample satisfaction to Englishmen:

Neutral? Yes, in the name of the nation, but not in our heart of hearts. We are for the England which has been gradually freeing the world while Germany has been planning to enslave it. No one of the great colonies which owe her so much and are responding so nobly to her call is more true to the glorious aspiration for which now she is giving her life-blood than these United States. Gradually and gropingly, I admit, but assuredly at last we have attained a realization and understanding which at the moment of effectiveness will render it impossible for any titular Government to fail to do its full part.

So, according to both these writers, American neutrality is only a prelude to action at "the moment of effectiveness," but there is an essential difference between the kind of action that they contemplate. Mr. Garrison Villard looks forward to protecting Germany from the exorbitancy of the victorious Allies; Mr. Harvey to helping the world—we will not say the Allies—to emancipate itself from the despotism which has made militarism and produced this terrible conflict. The proposition must be left vague, or Mr. Harvey's neutrality might be compromised, like Mr. Villard's. But it is at least conceivable that at the end of this war the co-operation of the United States in securing the peace of the civilized world and its freedom from the burdens of militarism may be a highly important, if not an essential, condition to a permanent settlement.

A CANADIAN OPINION

(From the *Toronto Mail*)

In a recent letter to the London *Times* Colonel Harvey, the noted American writer, pointed out the possibility of Great Britain and the United States drifting apart. The *Times* was of opinion that Colonel Harvey was mistaken, and that whatever friction between the two countries may have been produced by the war will speedily disappear, and that when it is over they will be found much as they were before. The London *Spectator* claims the privilege of a life-long friend of the United States to voice its apprehension upon this subject. That there was general disappointment in Great Britain that the United States as the chief neutral country of the world did not at least protest against the violation of Belgium's neutrality by Germany, and later on against the inhuman methods of warfare that had been adopted by Germany, is not to be denied. There was also some irritation that the first American protest should have concerned itself with restrictions placed upon American trade by the British cordon blockade of German ports, especially

in view of the fact that the Allies are spending tens of millions of dollars in the United States for munitions of war. There is a disposition in some quarters to suspect Uncle Sam of being chiefly interested in matters that concern his own pocket, but in face of the great work that American hospitals and American philanthropists have been doing in Belgium this sneer is undeserved.

In discussing the matter the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, one of the most influential newspapers in the United States, blames the American Government for the secrecy with which it has conducted its foreign negotiations, and says: "There is no possible question as to the extent and the intensity of American sympathy with the Allies." Nor, we think, has this ever been questioned in any responsible British newspaper. It was not to have been expected that the United States Government, whose chief and vital duty was to keep out of the fighting, should have formally passed a motion of sympathy with Great Britain in her hour of trouble. Between the masses of the American people and the American Government a sharp distinction must be always kept in mind. It is the great newspapers of the United States, and not the President and Cabinet, who really represent the American nation at this time. With the people the British Empire was never before held in such high esteem, and relations between the two countries after the war is over ought to be more brotherly than ever before.

PENROSE

(From the Pittsburg Chronicle Telegraph)

"Why not Penrose for President?" asks Colonel Harvey, in *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*.

We were on the point of answering with another question, "Well, why not, Colonel?" when the thought occurred that Harvey was speaking as a proponent or protagonist of the Pennsylvania Senator, whose popularity was so largely manifested in the primary and general elections of this State last year. He simply challenges any one to produce a reason why Penrose should not be acclaimed generally for President, and if any one has the temerity to attempt it the Colonel will unsheath his trenchant pen and say something sassy.

But, seriously, didn't Colonel Harvey get enough of President-making previous to the election of 1912 when he was Warwickling around with *Harper's Weekly* in behalf of Woodrow Wilson? We dislike to recall to the Colonel's mind that unpleasant incident in the story of his life in which his candidate asked him to suspend publication, for the reason that he was doing the cause more harm than good, but surprise that he should resume President-making in spite of it makes it impossible to do otherwise. The Colonel has brought this on himself. Perhaps, however, he is impressed by contemplation of the public career of Penrose that ingratitude is not one of the Senator's failings, and that, unlike another whom the Colonel boomed for first place in the hearts of his countrymen, the Senator may express appreciation of the motive even if not accepting the service.

(From the Worcester Post)

"Why not Penrose for President?" asks Colonel Harvey in *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*. No better fit could be possible for the purposes of the reactionist Republican plunderbund.

PRAISE FROM SIR HUBERT

(From the New York Sun)

The *Sun* has deferred until the proper moment the pleasant duty of congratulating THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW upon a rounded century of useful and honorable existence. It is our senior by eighteen years and four months. The whole year 1915 is being celebrated in the anniversary way by THE NORTH AMERICAN, but its actual birth month was May in 1815, and it is therefore just entering upon its second great cycle.

A long succession of able editors, including some of the most eminent of American men of letters, has given uninterrupted distinction to the pages of this REVIEW and imparted considerable variety to its policy and style. No other editor of THE NORTH AMERICAN has dared to attempt so marked a departure from conventional lines as that which has been noted since Colonel George Harvey concentrated his intelligent energies upon the conduct of the venerable publication.

In past days THE NORTH AMERICAN may have been edited at times with equal wisdom and equal dignity, but surely never in the twelve hundred months of its respectable life has it been edited with so flexible a wit, with so keen a sense of the relative value of actualities, with so expert a knowledge of what written things are of human interest.

Colonel Harvey has made of the old magazine a vehicle of real power and a creature of real grace; a trip-hammer and a bibelot; the sort of engine which it used to be the fashion to describe as capable either of coming down hard enough to pulverize a steel ingot or of descending so gently as to rest on a watch crystal without crushing it. The latter treatment is that which the Hon. Woodrow Wilson seems to be getting.

We beg leave to renew to THE NORTH AMERICAN and its admirable editor the assurances of our distinguished consideration.

(From the Hartford Courant)

One hundred years ago, May, 1815, the first number of this, THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, was published, and it is safe to say that at no time during the century of its existence has it been more vigorous or more influential. The editor's open letter to the London *Times*, printed in a recent number, attracted wide attention at home and abroad. The later article, on the Secretary of the Navy, was one of great ability. In this, the May number, Mr. Harvey writes concerning "Government and the War," a reply to Mr. Roosevelt's charges and accusations, which he takes up, one by one, and effectually discredits them.

(From the Boston Herald)

Boston from the start has had intimate associations with THE REVIEW. It has furnished such editors as Everett and Lowell, and Harvard has supplied others, as Jared Sparks and Dana. Thousands will plead with Mr. Lodge to a "personal affection" for the magazine. And it is far younger to-day than many a juvenile monthly with pretty girls on their covers and best-sellers between them. Nowadays, with Col. George Harvey in the chair, it coruscates and scintillates, all unconscious of its venerable age.

(From the Troy Times)

The masters of English political satire of the eighteenth century might well admit as entitled to their literary fellowship Col. George Harvey of **THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW**. Where was there ever a more keenly thrusting review of a career than that in the April number of the century-old **NORTH AMERICAN**? No living American can parallel Colonel Harvey's writing in this vein.

(From the Houston Post)

Each succeeding issue in its hundredth-anniversary year equals, if it does not surpass, its predecessor.

(From the Albany Times-Union)

We do not know how **THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW** can be any better than it is; but if there is a way Colonel Harvey will find it.